

## **we bloom until we ache** by **ilmostro**

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**Summary:**

a collection of times mike kisses will on the forehead, because he's the perfect height for it.

also because love and stuff

## **we bloom until we ache**

Will Byers encountered his first bully when he was seven years old.

At that age, there was no reason for his peers to dislike him. Sure, he was a little quiet. He kept to himself and drew pictures during recess instead of running around with the other boys. He was just a little shy. They were too young to notice important differences in each other just yet.

The kid must have just not liked him very much as a person, or maybe his dad wasn't very nice to him at home, like Will's dad was, and needed someone to take it out on. He didn't know. It didn't really matter. The kid shoved him onto the gravel regardless.

That was all he did, thankfully, but it left a bloody scrape on the left side of his forehead, closer to his temple, right before he had to ride his bike home. He didn't want his dad to see. He would give Will another talk about being a man, about being strong, and he didn't like those. He liked when him and mommy went out to the farmer's market and she let him pick out flowers for the house. He didn't like to be mean, like his dad tried to make him be. He wanted to make people smile, not cry.

So he said nothing, did nothing, and let the kid walk away laughing with his friend. It was okay. It didn't hurt much. He just didn't want his dad to see.

He came up with a plan. Instead of going straight home, he would go to Mike's house and bring him the homework he missed. His best friend was home sick, or home pretending to be sick more likely, and he would know what to do. Mike always knew what to do.

Mike's house wasn't too far from the school, so Will rode his new bike over. His forehead hurt, and he was starting to get a headache, but he kept going until he got to the Wheeler house. He carefully dismounted and kicked his bike stand out, making sure his bike stayed put. When he got to the front door, he rang the doorbell and waiting.

“Coming!” Mike’s fake-sick voice came from inside the house.

The lock clicked and the front door swung open to reveal Mike, looking overly tired, wrapping in a blanket. As soon as he saw Will, he immediately brightened, dropping his facade. His expression subsequently fell when he saw the scrape on Will’s forehead.

“Woah, what happened to you?”

He opened the door wider so Will could come in, immediately leading him to the bathroom.

“I uh, tripped,” Will said quietly, fiddling with the strap on his backpack. Mike tsked, pulling out the first aid kid from the medicine cabinet and sitting Will down on the side of the tub.

“You gotta be more careful, clumsy,” Mike scolded him gently. He pulled out a disinfectant wipe and put a bracing hand on Will’s shoulder. “This is gonna sting.”

Will squeezed his eyes shut, and Mike gently wiped the scrape clean. It did sting, a lot, but Mike’s hand on his shoulder gave him something else to focus on instead of the pain. Mike threw out the wipe and tore open the small single-use packet of ointment.

“That was good,” he praised Will. “Worst part’s over now.”

He dabbed the ointment onto the scrape and then grabbed the box of cartoon character band aids, holding it out to Will. “Which one do you want?”

Will picked Tweety Bird. Mike nodded approvingly.

“Good choice,” he said, carefully unwrapping it and applying the band aid with surgical precision. He stood back and checked to make sure everything was in order.

Then, he leaned forward and placed a gentle kiss over the bandaid.

“Oh,” Will breathed out softly. “What was that for?”

Mike started to clean up the supplies, throwing out the garbage and

putting the rest of the kit away. He turned back towards Will and offered him a bright smile.

“Mommy always kisses my band aids after she gives me one. She says it helps it to heal faster,” he explained, extending his hand to help Will off the tub. “Wanna go play? I got crayons from the grocery store the other day for you.”

“Okay,” Will agreed. “I have to call my mom first, though. I didn’t tell her.”

He followed Mike to the kitchen where their phone was. Mike made them peanut butter sandwiches while Will let his mom know his whereabouts. The spot Mike kissed tingled in a warm, pleasant way, and he followed his friend up to his bedroom with a shy smile.

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Will was seventeen, and still haunted by nightmares of the Mind Flayer. Night terrors, his psychiatrist called them, but the term had scared him ever since he first heard it all those years ago. He preferred to just call them nightmares, and that was all.

Unfortunately, with his nightmares, came a lot of erratic thrashing and spasms in his sleep that he was unable to control. On nights that were particularly bad, Will had a history of falling out of bed and banging up some part of his body. Usually he was pretty lucky with it and didn’t hurt himself anywhere super visible, but it was the week of Halloween, and his *nightmares* had been unforgiving.

He went to school with a giant, embarrassing bruise smack dab in the middle of his forehead. Luckily his mom hadn’t been home to see it, but he was dreading when she would later. She always got worried around this time of year, even though Will hadn’t had an episode in over two years.

When he met Mike at his locker, his boyfriend’s eyes widened.

“Holy shit, what happened to you?” He asked, immediately stepping closer to inspect the admittedly angry-looking bruise. Will shrugged.

“Turns out foreheads and desks don’t get along very well, especially

when combined with gravity,” Will explained, feeling stupid. He was embarrassed he still didn’t have a handle on his nightmares, even though he knew it wasn’t his fault.

“I swear I’m going to wrap you up in bubble wrap someday,” Mike replied in exasperation, gently stroking his thumb against Will’s skin next to the bruise. Will closed his eyes, comforted. The bell chimed, reminding them of their reality.

Will could already feel everyone’s eyes on him, as they always were. He dreaded going through his day without Mike. They only had a couple classes together this year, meaning it was open season for the assholes who liked to antagonize him without his 6’2” boyfriend around. Not that they were out just yet, but Mike was intimidating when he wanted to be, and they were nearly always connected at the hip. No one bothered him with Mike hovering nearby.

Mike caught his expression, and made a split decision.

“Hey, let’s get out of here, yeah? Let’s play hooky.”

Will looked at him in surprise. “We can’t just—”

“Yes, we can,” Mike said, already looking around for any faculty who would catch them leaving. “And we are.”

He grabbed Will’s hand and quickly dragged them through the student rush and out the main entrance. They grabbed their bikes in a hurry, giggling madly, and peddled out as fast as they could.

“Where are we going?” Will asked as soon as the school was out of sight and they could slow down.

“Let’s go to the park. That cool?”

“Definitely.”

They rode in silence, arriving at the park in no time. They locked their bikes up and walked to their favorite bench, the one that overlooked the duck pond. Mike reached for his hand as soon as they could tell no one was around. He turned towards Will, the morning breeze rustling his curls and reminding Will that he was way, way

out of his league. He looked at the bruise with a small frown.

“Do you want to talk about it?”

Will shook his head.

“Okay. That’s fine. Do you want to go get hot dogs and feed the buns to the ducks?”

Somehow, Mike always knew what to say.

Will nodded, and Mike stood up, pulling him up by their intertwined hands. They stood chest to chest, and Mike cupped the back of Will’s head, very, very softly kissing the bruise on his forehead.

“I love you,” he whispered against Will’s skin, and Will took a deep breath.

“I love you, too.”

Mike smiled at him fondly and led the way to the stand, swinging their hands between them.

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“Dance with me?”

Will extended his hand, his pulse racing as Mike took it.

He looked incredible in his black suit and navy blue tie, his curly hair starting to grey at his temples, the smile lines on his face pronounced as he grinned radiantly at Will. Middle age looked amazing on him, and Will was so in love he could hardly breathe.

Will led them to the middle of the floor, wrapping an arm around Mike’s waist and raising the other for him to take. Mike stepped into place with him just as the music began, and together, they began their first dance as husband and husband.

A slow ballad version of “I Wanna Dance With Somebody” played throughout the reception hall from the speakers over by the DJ stand, and they moved together with the ease of over three decades of coexistence. With the ease of three decades of growth, devotion, and

endless laughter.

Will had a feeling growing in his chest like he could float right to the ceiling, lost in the warm, steady grip of Mike's hand in his and his heartbeat against his chest. Mike was looking at him like he'd never seen anything more breathtaking in all his life, and even now, some 30 plus years later, Will blushed under the intensity of his gaze. He was dancing with his husband. They were married.

There was a time when Will thought he would never find happiness, let alone with the one person he truly wanted it with. And now, under the intimate lighting of the reception hall, it seemed absolutely surreal. This was Mike, the boy who's patched him up since they were children, who scared off his bullies, who held him when his nightmares got the better of him. The boy who followed him to art school, posed for him when he needed a model, held his hand when he came out to his family. The boy who turned the radio up loud when the voices in his head wouldn't shut up, and spun him around their tiny apartment until his body felt like his own again.

He married the man who proposed to him at the swingset where they met, even though it started to pour as soon as they got there. Drenched, hair in his eyes, and a half-terrified smile on his lips as he asked Will if he would mind having Mike stick around for a little while longer. His whole life, as a matter of fact. The man who held him in the pouring rain as he cried into his chest and couldn't stop saying 'yes'.

He felt Mike stopped swaying them. The song was over, and the room had broken out in applause and whistles. He could hear their family celebrating the loudest, as they always did. He looked over at the tables, where his mom was crying, Jim basically holding her up. Jonathan, Nancy, and Steve were all cheering like their favorite sports team had won the game, and- there went Dustin, standing on top of his chair and battle-crying at the top of his lungs while Max, Lucas, *and* Eleven all tried to get him down. Will started to laugh from pure elation.

Mike joined him, his eyes wet from happy, unshed tears. He slid his hand up Will's arm and cupped him around the back of his neck, his thumb pressed to the fluttering pulse under Will's jaw.

His husband dipped his head forward and kissed him on the forehead, like he has so many times before, and sealed his silent, lifelong promise of forever.

Will took his hand, knowing full well the whole room was watching and *wanting* them to, and together they went to rejoin their family.

**Author's Note:**

hi im shit at summaries but i wanted an excuse to write byeler forehead kisses and here we are. it's super self indulgent but i hope you like it anyway! let me know what you thought! here or on tumblr (tozbraks). enjoy! :)